

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 02223 101855Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
/052 W

-----075817 111729Z /11

R 101825Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7176
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 2223

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GY
SUBJECT: THE GUYANESE REFERENDUM AT MID-DAY

REF: A. GEORGETOWN 2165, B. GEORGETOWN 2187, C. GEORGETOWN 2213

1. ON JULY 8, THE HIGH COURT DISMISSED THE MOTION TO BLOCK
THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM (REF A). THE PRESIDING JUDGE
DECLARED THAT THE PLAINTIFF'S CASE WAS "TOTALLY UNTENABLE,
DEVOID OF MERIT, AND UNSUSTAINABLE". COURT COSTS WERE AWARDED
IN FAVOR OF THE DEFENDANTS.

2. POLLS OPENED AT 6 AM ON REFERENDUM DAY, THE 10TH. THE
GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON RADIO NEWSCASTS ONE HOUR LATER THAT
"THOUSANDS" OF GUYANESE HAD ALREADY GONE TO THE POLLS. HOW-
EVER, PRIVATE REPORTS AND EMBASSY SPOT CHECKS OF POLLING
STATIONS IN GEORGETOWN INDICATED THAT THE TURNOUT WAS VERY

LIGHT, AS EVIDENCED BY A LACK OF LINES OF WAITING VOTERS
PRESENT DURING PREVIOUS GENERAL ELECTIONS.
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3. GEORGETOWN APPEARED CALM MID-WAY THROUGH THE REFERENDUM
ON JULY 10. GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE (GDF) PATROLS, DRESSED
IN COMBAT FATIGUES AND EQUIPPED WITH RADIOS AND RIFLES
OR AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, WERE CONSPICUOUS IN MOST PARTS OF
THE CITY. GDF CONCENTRATIONS WERE REPORTED AS WELL IN
THE BAUXITE CENTER OF LINDEN OVER THE WEEKEND, ALTHOUGH

THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF DISTURBANCES DESPITE THE WILDCAT STRIKES WHICH WERE SAID TO BE CONTINUING THROUGH JULY 10. ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY THE MEDIA REPORTED THAT 107 ACRES OF YOUNG CANE SUGAR WERE BURNED AT ALBION IN THE BERBICE AREA OVER THE WEEKEND, PURPORTEDLY BY ARSONISTS.

4. THE OPPOSITION TO THE REFERENDUM CONTINUED THEIR CALL FOR A BOYCOTT (REF B). IN ADDITION, SOME MEMBERS OF THE THREE LABOR UNIONS IN OPPOSITION TO THE REFERENDUM WENT ON STRIKE. THE CLERICAL AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION (CCWU) URGED WORKERS NOT TO REPORT FOR WORK ON THE 10TH FOR REASONS OF "SAFETY". HOWEVER, THE UNION APPARENTLY DID NOT ESTABLISH ANY PICKET LINES IN GEORGETOWN, AND MOST OF THE ESTABLISHMENTS ORGANIZED BY THE CCWU IN THE CAPITAL REMAINED OPEN. PRIVATELY-OWNED "RADIO DEMARARA" ANNOUNCED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYEES (NAACIE) AND THE GUYANA ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION (GAWU) HAD ADVERSELY AFFECTED PRODUCTION AT SEVERAL OF THE SUGAR ESTATES BY NOT REPORTING FOR WORK.

5. COMMENT: COUNTING OF THE BALLOTS IS TO BEGIN UPON THE 6 PM CLOSING OF THE POLLS AND PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE BALLOTING ARE TO BE ANNOUNCED ON JULY 11TH. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SUSPENSE AS TO THE OUTCOME, THERE IS CONSIDERED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABLE INTEREST IN THE FIGURES THE GOVERNMENT WILL ANNOUNCE ON VOTER TURNOUT.
DWYER

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NNN

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